



## **CEPPS/NDI Quarterly Report: April 1, 2005 to June 26, 2005**

### **SENEGAL: INCREASING WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION USAID Associate Cooperative Agreement No. 685-A-00-03-00094-00 under CEPPS Leader Cooperative Agreement No. DGC-A-00-01-00004-00**

**Project dates: April 15, 2003 to June 26, 2005**

#### **I. SUMMARY**

Senegal's political landscape this quarter was dominated by tensions over the adoption by the National Assembly of legislation establishing the National Autonomous Electoral Commission (CENA) and the creation by President Wade of a new voter registry. Although the legislation defining the powers of the CENA was unanimously adopted by the National Assembly on May 3, political party leaders continue to debate certain modifications to the legislation and how best to establish the CENA's leadership. Observers have remarked that although the CENA was created to reduce electoral tensions, the process of establishing the body has instead done the reverse. Opposition parties, who have stepped up efforts to rally public opinion against President Wade, launched a march through Dakar in April, calling upon him to step down.

NDI completed its leadership capacity building trainings for local councilwomen this quarter to conclude activities for this two year project. NDI conducted its final training sessions in the regions of Dakar and Kolda. Overall, the Institute received positive feedback from the women councilors who attended the trainings in Dakar and Kolda. Councilwomen reported that the trainings had provided them with tools to better represent their constituencies and network with one another. Local and national government officials also demonstrated strong support for the trainings in these regions. Moreover, trainer reports from these regions indicated a demonstrated post-training improvement in women councilors' public speaking, budget preparation, advocacy and other leadership skills.

NDI has continued to provide support for the Network of Women Councilors of Senegal (RENELS), which was inaugurated with NDI assistance in February 2005. The Institute has been encouraged this quarter by the fact that councilwomen have begun using RENELS and their regional women's councilor associations as structures through which to exchange information and organize activities to promote women's political participation. Through these structures, local women councilors have collaborated to increase women's political participation through such initiatives as micro-credit and women's leadership programs and AIDS awareness campaigns. In organizing these initiatives, women councilors have demonstrated that they are effectively applying the skills they gained in NDI trainings to leading their communities.

While NDI's project concluded this quarter, the Institute will continue to monitor the political landscape and explore possibilities for future programs to help strengthen Senegal's democracy.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

As opposition and ruling party leaders continued to debate issues regarding the structure of the CENA and implementation of a new voter registry, opposition leaders increased efforts to rally public opinion against President Wade's administration. With rumors circulating about a fifth cabinet reshuffle, concern over government monopoly of the state media, and widespread skepticism about Wade's commitment to transparent elections in 2006 and 2007, opposition leaders have repeatedly criticized Wade's policies this quarter.

During Senegal's April 4 Independence Day celebration, President Wade announced that he had reviewed the legislation establishing the CENA and had sent it to the National Assembly for adoption. Press reports later revealed that Wade had modified the legislation before submitting it to the National Assembly without notifying the multiparty committee that had drafted the original legislation. The administration had alerted the leader of the multiparty committee, Babacar Gueye, of these changes, but Gueye, a Wade supporter, failed to share the modifications with the rest of the multiparty committee. Gueye argued that he did not share the administration's changes before submitting it to the National Assembly because the changes were inconsequential. This issue contributed to increased tensions between opposition and ruling party leaders.

On April 12, the opposition coalition, Cadre permanent de concertation (CPC), organized appreciatively 5000 anti-government protesters to march in the streets of Dakar. Demonstrators called for free and fair elections, an end to the government's monopoly of the media and an investigation into the perpetrators of the physical assault in October 2004 on Talla Sylla, leader of the Jef jel opposition party. Protesters also called on President Wade to resign. While Minister of Interior Ousmane Ngom called the protest peaceful, reports alleged that pro-government groups threw stones at demonstrators. Organizers of the march also accused government security forces of barring demonstrators from rallying protest sites.

On May 3, the National Assembly unanimously adopted the legislation to establish the CENA. The legislation is silent, however, on the size and composition of the executive body of the CENA, an issue that remains under dispute.

## **III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

During this quarter, NDI continued its capacity building trainings for the women councilor associations. The Institute conducted trainings in the regions of Dakar and Kolda. Due to financial constraints related to the cost of closing its Senegal office, NDI could not conduct the training in the region of Tambacounda. NDI also hosted a meeting with the RENELS leadership and project donors, during which the presidents of the regional women's councilor associations shared current community development initiatives they are organizing and discussed

strategies to consolidate RENELS. In addition, the Institute assisted RENELS in initiating meetings with potential donors and partners, including the US Ambassador to Senegal, the Senegalese Minister of Environment and Agricultural Protection and the Minister of State and Minister of Decentralization.

### **A. Trainings for Women Councilor Associations**

From April 6 to 14, NDI conducted capacity building trainings in the regions of Kolda and Dakar. In the region of Kolda, NDI trained councilwomen in the departments of Sedhiou and Kolda. In the Dakar region, the Institute conducted trainings in the departments of Pikine, Rufisque, Guédiawaye and Dakar. Guédiawaye and Rufisque hosted one training session each, while the departments of Dakar and Pikine hosted 3 and 2 training sessions respectively to accommodate the over 500 women councilors in Dakar, Senegal's most populous region. As was the case in other regions where NDI conducted trainings, local authorities showed strong support for the trainings. Each opening ceremony was attended by either a préfet, a mayor or a member of parliament representative.

The trainings were well attended and received strong support from local and national government officials. NDI trainers focused on building councilwomen's leadership skills, assisting them in elaborating and adopting community budgets, practicing advocacy and public speaking skills, and better understanding Senegal's decentralization system. To encourage cooperation and teamwork, the trainers separated councilwomen into small work groups in which they strategized together to create budgets and discuss leadership strategies. To assist women in developing advocacy skills, trainers engaged councilwomen in role play scenarios through which they practiced lobbying on selected issues. Additional training techniques included having councilwomen deliver verbal presentations in front of their colleagues, present sketches to illustrate community problems, and share their personal stories about leading their communities.

#### *Training in the Region of Kolda*

NDI conducted leadership training in the departments of Sedhiou and Kolda. In Sedhiou, 32 out of a total of 57 women councilors attended the training, which took place at the mayor's office. The préfet demonstrated his support for the trainings by personally calling each president of the department's rural council to ensure that the women councilors received their invitations and were planning to attend. The préfet and the mayor also attended the opening ceremony. In their opening remarks, they encouraged the women councilors to be attentive to the trainings to best contribute to effective leadership in their communities. They also advised the women's councilor associations to file the paperwork that will allow them to function as an official legal entity and qualify for Senegalese government support. NDI trainers reported that women councilors from Sedhiou showed particularly strong enthusiasm for and interest in the trainings.



Women councilors during the leadership training in Kolda

In the Department of Kolda, the training took place in the conference room of the Kolda regional council. Of a total of 42 councilwomen, 25 attended. The Prefet of the region Bacar Diouf; the representative of the Iman, Mouhamadou Thiam; and the Deputy Mayor of Kolda, Khadidiatou Dia; attended the opening ceremony. In their remarks, these officials thanked NDI and USAID for providing the council women with strengthened community leadership skills.

### *Trainings in the region of Dakar*

In the Dakar region, NDI conducted leadership training in the departments of Dakar, Guédiawaye, Rufisque and Pikine, training over 500 women in the region.

### *Department of Dakar*

The Institute conducted three training sessions in the Department of Dakar from April 12 to 14. The first training session took place in the Centre Socio-Cultural of Ngor, with participants from the communes of Mermoz-Sacré-Coeur, Ngor, Ouakam and Yoff. The second training session took place in the Centre Socio-Cultural of Sacré-Coeur with participants from the communes of Biscuiterie, Dieuppeul-Derklé, Grand Dakar, Hann-Bel Air, HLM and Sicap Liberté. Training councilwomen from the communes of Grand-Yoff, Patte-D’oie, Camberène, and Parcelles Assainies, the third session was held in the Centre Socio-Cultural des Parcelles Assainies.

The number of participants was relatively low on the first day of training at the Ngor site, due to a demonstration organized the same day by one of Senegal’s opposition coalitions. Attendance increased for the remaining two days, however. On the first day, 22 council women out of a total of 48 participated, while 29 attended on the final two days. The Mayor of the Ngor Commune, Mamadou Kane, attended the opening ceremony. During his opening remarks, he thanked NDI for training councilwomen at a time when the country is in particular need of skilled leaders to implement the nation’s decentralization policy.

At the Sacre-Coeur training site, 48 out of a total of 73 council women attended. Fewer councilwomen participated on the second day because of the visit of the President of Brazil. Pape Mbodj, the Sous Prefet of Grand – Dakar, presided over the opening ceremony. Baye Thiam, Cabinet Director of the Mayor of Sacre Coeur, and Mariétou Diaw, Manager of the Centre Socio-Cultural of Sacre-Coeur, also attended the ceremony. In their remarks, these officials expressed their support for the trainings and encouraged participants to take full advantage of the trainings.



Women councilors during the leadership training in Sacré-Coeur

At the Parcelles Assainies site, 36 out of a total of 46 council women participated in the training. The opening ceremony was presided over by Mbaye Ndiaye, a Member of Parliament

and Mayor of Parcelles Assainies. In his opening remarks, he underlined the value of the training and thanked NDI for the opportunity the Institute was giving women councilors to build their leadership skills. In Parcelles Assainies, NDI trainers put particular emphasis on participative skills, encouraging councilwomen to practice making contributions to discussions and debates to solve fictitious problem scenarios.

#### *Department of Guediawaye*

NDI conducted trainings in Guediawaye from April 12 to 14. Out of a total of 75 women councilors, 57 attended. On the second day, however, 12 participants left the training to welcome the Brazilian president to Senegal. The prefet of the department was present during the opening ceremony. He acknowledged the “incredible role NDI continues to play to consolidate the democratic process in Senegal by empowering women elected officials.” He explained that the effect of NDI’s capacity building trainings is noticeable in his work with women councilors who attended the training. The Mayor of the commune of Wakhianane attended the closing ceremony. NDI noted with satisfaction that many local government officials in this department are women, including the assistant to the prefet, the chief of sport services, the chief police officer and the city chief of the financial services. Many of these officials also attended the opening ceremony.

#### *Department of Rufisque*

From April 12 to 15, NDI conducted leadership training in the Department of Rufisque, which includes the communes of Rufisque, Bargny, Sebikhotane and Diamniadio, and the rural communes of the Department of Rufisque. Out of a total of 55 councilwomen, 36 participated. Women councilors in this department took the initiative to organize the training. They identified the training center, sent out the invitation letters to fellow councilors and local authorities and made follow up calls to ensure a well attended session. During the opening ceremony, which different local authorities attended, the Minister of Public Services and Labor made a surprise visit and expressed his support for the trainings.

#### *Department of Pikine*

NDI conducted leadership trainings in the Department of Pikine from April 6 to 8 in the Case de l’Hotel de Ville of Pikine. Out of a total of 75 women councilors in the department, 65 attended the training. Mayor of Pikine, Daour Niang, attended the opening ceremony. In his remarks, he thanked NDI and encouraged the participants to take full advantage of the training. He also promised to make a car and driver available to the Women’s Councilor Association of Pikine and to contribute funds to the organization of future women’s leadership trainings.

### **B. Meetings between RENELS and partners**

On June 16, NDI met with the leadership of RENELS, NDI trainers, and representatives from USAID and the U.S. Embassy in Dakar. The objectives of the meeting were: 1) for the presidents of the regional women’s councilor associations to share with one another and with

USAID, the U.S. Embassy and NDI current projects they are initiating in their communities; and 2) for NDI to officially announce the closing of its Senegal office on June 30.

At this meeting, NDI staff were encouraged by the initiative the women councilors had taken to organize community development initiatives in their regions. In the region of Diourbel, for example, women councilors created a micro credit union through which women may borrow money to launch small businesses. Councilwomen in Dakar are organizing a general assembly to discuss their political and community development objectives with their communities. At this assembly, the councilwomen will propose regional programs to combat AIDS and drug use and to strengthen women's leadership. In the region of Kolda, women councilors have approached regional government officials about conducting an AIDS awareness program. It was evident at this meeting that the women councilors are using their regional women's councilor associations and RENELS as structures through which to share ideas and strengthen women's political participation in their communities.

#### *Meeting with the US Ambassador to Senegal*

At the request of the leadership of RENELS, the US Ambassador to Senegal met with the network on June 23. Representatives from USAID, the Senegalese Council of Women (COSEF) and NDI also attended the meeting.

During the meeting, the Ambassador asked the women councilors to share challenges they are currently facing and potential obstacles to increasing women's representation on party lists for the 2006 legislative elections. In the course of the discussion, RENELS President Emilie Diatta requested that the embassy and USAID continue to sponsor NDI's activities in Senegal, stating that women candidates would greatly benefit from NDI's campaign skills training in the lead up to the 2006 legislative elections. Representatives from RENELS also asked the Ambassador to help find funds to conduct leadership trainings in the Tambacounda region, the only Senegalese region in which NDI was unable to conduct trainings. The Ambassador stated that the Embassy will review the requests made by the women during the meeting, and added that the Embassy and USAID will do their best to address them. He promised to seek ways to integrate RENELS and women councilors in general in as many US government funded programs as possible.

#### *Meeting with the Minister of Environment*

Also on June 23, the leadership of RENELS met with Modou Diagne Fada, the Minister of the Environment and Agricultural Protection. RENELS had requested a meeting with him to introduce the network and discuss the possibility of collaboration on future environmental initiatives. NDI representatives also attended the meeting.

RENELS President Emilie Diatta introduced the network and expressed interest in collaboration with the Environmental Ministry to respond to community environmental issues such as reforestation projects and topics of particular concern to women, such as the deficit of fire wood in rural areas with which to cook. In response, the Minister invited the women to send him their ideas for collaborative environmental projects in their regions. Overall, the Minister

gave RENELS the impression that his door is open to them and that he will consider future collaborative initiatives.

#### **IV. RESULTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

**Objective:** To improve the ability of women councilors to represent constituents and play a leadership role in decision-making at the local level.

**Indicators:**

- Evaluations completed by women councilors after the trainings revealed that women councilors felt empowered to better represent their constituencies. NDI staff and trainers reported that following the trainings, participants were able to discuss the importance of the decentralization system, name the different local collectivities, and accurately describe the process of budget design and adoption. In particular, during the training in the department of Guediawaye, councilwomen's new skills were evident through a role play in which they persuasively articulated their need for a specific type of presidential financial assistance to fund specific community projects.
- Working through their regional women councilor associations, women councilors have demonstrated their increased capacity for leadership by initiating a range of community projects at the regional level.
- Women councilors shared with NDI other ways in which they have started to apply their new skills in their daily life. Councilor Cathy Diémé of the department of Dakar told NDI, "Since I received the training organized by NDI, I am always solicited by my coworkers and I actively participate in developmental association activities. The people who knew me before are now surprised by my activism."
- Councilwoman Bousso Guèye of the Ouakam commune said even though she cannot read, after receiving NDI's training, she feels equipped enough to attend the commune meetings and contribute to the discussions.
- During his remarks at the training in Dakar, Mor Sène, representative of the Regional Development Agency, said he had attended local government meetings in which local development plans were designed in all communes of Dakar. Mr. Sène said he was impressed by the level of participation of the women councilors who had participated in NDI leadership training prior to these sessions. He stated that he was "fascinated by the long term effects of the trainings."
- Councilwomen who are members of RENELS have together taken the initiative to meet with central government officials such as the Minister of the Environment and Agricultural Protection and the Minister of State to discuss the needs of their respective communities. They also initiated meetings with potential partners outside the Senegalese government, such as the US Embassy and USAID.

**Objective 2:** To strengthen support for information networks among women councilors across the country.

**Indicators:**

- Senegalese local and national authorities have demonstrated increased support for the regional women councilor associations, RENELS and initiatives aimed at strengthening women's political participation generally. These authorities helped organize NDI's leadership trainings, attended them and offered follow up and in kind support, such as providing training venues and transport, offering advice to the councilors, and suggesting strategies to assist councilwomen in organizing activities. For example, the prefet of Dakar encouraged councilwomen to officially register their association so that they will be eligible to receive funding from the Senegalese government and international organizations.
- During the training in the department of Dakar, the mayor of the Camberène Commune offered 100,000 CFA to 4 regional women's councilor associations. On the last day of the training, the mayor of Grand-Yoff made a surprise visit to the councilors and donated 40,000 CFA to their associations.
- Councilwomen have demonstrated an increased desire to communicate and cooperate by using NDI's trainings as forums in which to exchange information. During the training in the Sacre-Coeur site, Councilwoman Aimée Corr  a stated, "One of the main benefits of these trainings for me is the occasion they give me to meet my fellow women councilors and discuss with them." She further expressed that women councilors otherwise rarely have opportunities to meet.
- At the trainings, councilwomen also share practical information to help empower each other. For example, Councilwoman Nd  ye Fama of the commune of Sacre-Coeur informed her colleagues of a useful strategy for women to acquire land and build houses, explaining that in the commune of Grand-Yoff, the NGO Enda Graf purchases land for women who are united in an association.
- In the department of Dakar, similarly, Councilwoman Marie Samb encouraged her fellow women councilors to keep each other informed when they receive an invitation to attend a local government meeting, further promoting communication between women councilors to help increase their political participation. She also deplored the fact that the meeting invitations do not reach all councilwomen in time.

## **V. EVALUATION**

### *Trainings*



Local councilwomen trained by NDI have used their newly acquired leadership skills this quarter to initiate community development projects and advocate for the needs of their constituents before central government officials. The community development initiatives councilwomen have planned range from projects to encourage micro-enterprise among women to campaigns to combat HIV/AIDS. By applying their leadership skills in these ways, the councilwomen have demonstrated the positive impact of NDI's trainings in Senegal.

In addition, councilwomen who participated in the trainings demonstrated an increased interest in communicating across regions to share information and to support one another in leading and representing their communities. Examples cited in this report, including the fact that women exchanged information at NDI trainings about how to more easily acquire land and participate in local government meetings, demonstrate this eagerness and capacity to network with one another.

As in past quarters, councilwomen trained by NDI reported that they felt more confident about leading their communities. These women also demonstrated to trainers that they had gained sophisticated leadership skills, including the ability to draft and adopt a budget and construct effective arguments to represent the needs of their communities. The trainings this quarter have fostered an increased sense of solidarity among councilwomen. In training sessions, women shared stories about obstacles they faced in leading their communities and helped one another by brainstorming on strategies for overcoming their shared difficulties.

## **VI. FUTURE ACTIVITIES**

Although NDI's women's political participation project concluded on June 30, NDI plans to continue to monitor the political landscape in Senegal and the role of women in politics. In addition, NDI will stay in contact with its substantial network of Senegalese activists who are working to strengthen women's political participation. One way in which the Institute will do this is through a regional women's participation project that NDI will launch in August, 2005. Senegal is one of four target countries in this project, which will operate out of Bamako, Mali. The project will aim to help create a West African women's network to strengthen women's political participation in the region. Four Senegalese women will be selected to attend the project's launch conference, during which women from Senegal, Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso will work together to develop a strategy and design follow-on activities. In the coming months, moreover, NDI will continue to look for partners with whom to collaborate to continue to strengthen democracy generally, and women's political participation more specifically, in Senegal.